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old zeal and fire have insensibly diminished. Even in the present generation we ourselves have watched this decline make definite progress. Old priests from whom we learnt much of what is here given have died off, and their successors, while performing the motions of the ritual, have not shown half the knowledge of its inner meaning their sires did. Their surroundings have not lent them the inspiration they required to maintain the old time brilliancy of their religion.

With regard to the spiritism adopted in some quarters, the young priests are alleged to pass through a trance at their initiation. A spirit then is supposed to possess them, taking complete possession for the time being of their faculties. After this possession is over they are physically limp or half-exhausted until their strength is regained.

On the other hand, it is alleged that this is not always the case. The possession by the spirit is not real but simulated. An old priest instructs them how to feign the usual phenomena so that their reputation should not come behind others in having authority over occult powers.

Such as do have real experience with spirits profess to be able to call up these unseen personalities at will. By ways known to themselves they secure their aid or release from harmful influences. After a death, if the priest be up to his job, the spirit can lead back the departed soul under leash to his old home for a visit in a manner similar to the way shown in street processions of the actors of the Buddhist temple of hell.

In one district the priests carry, hung from their girdles, a bunch of ludicrously weird objects called the *Te-sa-a-ga*. Anything that is curious or strange enough or suggestive may find a place in the collection. Together they make a rare rattle for the ignorant and the gullible. You may see an eagle's bill, a cock's foot, a wild boar's tusk, a goat's horn, a bit of bone, a cymbal, deer's teeth, a Chinese charm cash, or a rare shell. Each object proclaims the exorcist powers of its possessor. With these by his side no one can doubt his ability to recall the soul in sickness, undo demoniac powers and save you in general from the evil eye.

Incidentally they prove a god-send to the sensationalist wiseacre. With these to shake in front of his audience, who dare doubt now that the Chiang are litholatrists, animists and demon worshippers! Seeing is believing? His case is proven. And he struts around as pleased with himself as the man who wears the lot at his belt.

He, however, who knows something of the genius of the beautiful old Chiang religion groans within himself at the sight of such things. How have the best become the worst? The *Te-sa-a-ga*, once pure as the morning light, has fallen from its high estate. We believe we hold the key to its primitive significance but must meanwhile wait before giving its solution. Sufficient here to say